



VILLAGE LIFE

MISTY CLIFFS CONSERVATION VILLAGE
COMMUNITY NEWS AND INFORMATION

MISTY CLIFFS VILLAGE ASSOCIATION

hiking / wildlife / conservation / fire / safety & security / pics of the season / important numbers

Spring 2024



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You can download the PDF of this magazine at www.mistycliffs.org.za

V I L L A G E L I F E

A Misty Cliffs Village Association Publication

Spring 2024

Where the mountains meet the sea

www.mistycliffs.org.za



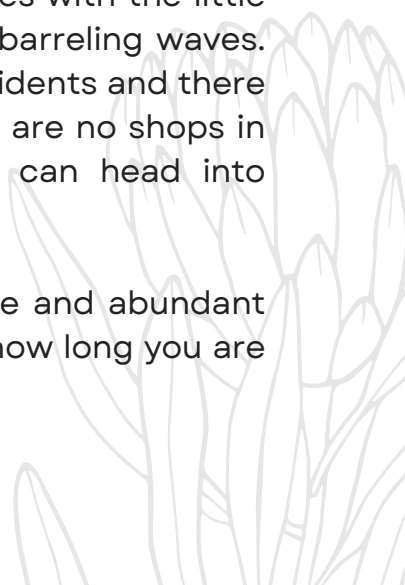


MISTY CLIFFS

Misty Cliffs is a small village nestled on the mountain slopes between Kommetjie and Scarborough, about 45 minutes drive from Cape Town in the Western Cape, South Africa. There are 43 houses in this little community. The town got its name from the constant mist that hangs over the village and the beach for most days of the year.

The beach is small, but it is great for walking or enjoying a picnic in the soft sand. The waves at Misty Cliffs beach can get quite large, making it not safe to swim, but the rock pools are great for exploring intertidal zones with the little ones. It's a very popular spot for surfers because of the big, barreling waves. During the peak season, the beach is mostly frequented by residents and there is plenty of space to enjoy the ocean air and relax fully. There are no shops in Misty Cliffs, so make sure you bring what you need. You can head into Scarborough or Kommetjie for a bite to eat.

A place like no other, Misty Cliffs welcomes you - with wildlife and abundant plant life, and the aroma of the ocean and fynbos. No matter how long you are staying, you are home. Enjoy!





WELCOME TO MISTY CLIFFS

Welcome to the inaugural issue of Village Life, your new Misty Cliffs community magazine! Our goal is to bring residents closer by sharing local news, events, and stories that matter to all of us.

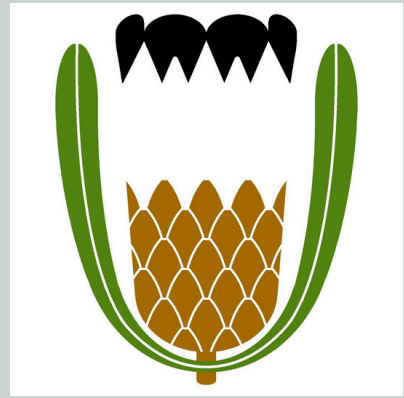
In this first issue, you'll find snippets on village history, profiles of inspiring locals, and information on what is going on in and around Misty Cliffs. We also feature tips for engaging with nature and security, and fire awareness information, as well as a special section to showcase some of our photographic talent. Village Life is your go-to source for staying connected and informed, and for any who live, work, own property or travel through Misty Cliffs, we trust that it will become an invaluable source of information and community building.

Hope you enjoy this first edition and we look forward to your feedback and contributions.

Happy reading!

Gavin Betty
Chairperson of the Misty Cliffs Village Association

“My altars are the mountains and the ocean.” Lord Byron



The Misty Cliffs Village Association is a registered Public Benefit Organisation based in Misty Cliffs, a conservation village on the Cape Peninsula surrounded by the Table Mountain National Park and Baskloof Private Fynbos Nature Reserve. The objectives of the Association are to promote activities that advance the interests of, and benefit, the community. This includes monitoring development in the village to ensure that building regulations are complied with and that the impact on the environment is minimized. The association also aims to promote awareness of the unique natural environment of the area and encourage its preservation and maintenance.



OUT AND ABOUT

Outdoors



The Misty Cliffs area offers a stunning variety of outdoor activities from surfing to hiking, short or long walks, and more.

There are a number of lovely trails on Baskloof Private Fynbos Nature Reserve behind Scarborough, with stunning vistas and breathtaking scenic beauty. One needs either a day or annual permit for these walks, which can be bought at The Hub on the Main Road in Scarborough. There are three official circular trails that start on Hilltop Road in Scarborough. One of the trails will take you to Kleinplaas Dam, but be careful to walk in a group as there are some safety issues along that path.

There is also a lovely walk from Misty Cliffs to the Crayfish Factory, along the coastline.

Another drawcard is the great surfing off the beach break, some calling it a swell magnet. Witsand Beach is a popular spot for all kinds of water sports - wind and kite surfing, as well as stand-up paddle boarding. It is a stunning spot, even if you are not on the water or in it.

The famed Cape Point Nature Reserve is worth a visit, and is not far away! From stunning natural rock swimming pools, such as Venus Pools (one of Cape Town's best kept secrets), to tidal pools and hikes, it is well worth the cost of the entrance fee. The Thomas Tucker Shipwreck Hike starts at Olifantsbos, and is a 3-4 hour walk suitable for children. You can extend the hike by 2km or so by going further up the coastline to see a more recent shipwreck, the Nolloth, before heading back to Olifantsbos.

All hiking trail route information is available at the entrance to the reserve or the visitors' centre.



FYNBOS WARRIORS

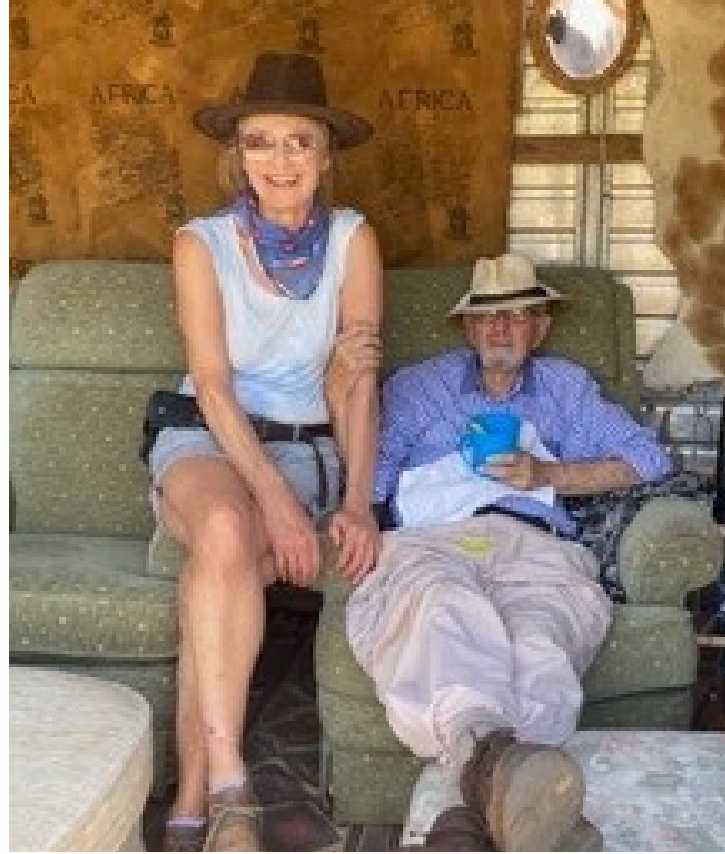
Meet the locals

Danielle and Ivan Harris have lived in Misty Cliffs for decades, passionate about the fynbos and preserving as much as they can through their Baskloof Fynbos Private Nature Reserve.

Their story with Misty Cliffs begins in the early 1960s, when Ivan Harris rented one of only six cottages in Misty Cliffs (Seagull's Nest) for a year ... and fell in love with the place. It was a rustic affair – no electricity – and they had to fetch water from the river in those days. Thirty years later, both Ivan and Danielle were drawn to the wild wonder of the cliffs that capture and circulate the air in mystical ways. They left the leafy southern suburbs and their previous lives to start their conservation journey here with a small motley crew of a community on the edge of this paradise.

It was in this raw and breathtaking pocket of nature that both became passionate about the ecosystem within which they were living.

“We had both been hikers and walked through fynbos for decades without knowing its true value,” says Ivan. What changed them? Being present here, clearing the first piece of land at Baskloof Private Nature Reserve of its alien vegetation, and a community of conservation-minded people living in Scarborough. There were botanists and environmental scientists from whom they learned and drew inspiration over time, opening Ivan and Danielle’s eyes to the wonders of fynbos and how crucial it is to the thriving of the ecosystem.



“We learned of the importance of preserving the fynbos,” explains Ivan, 91 and a half years old now. (“When you are 91, the half matters,” he laughed during the interview.) “The world is broken up into six floral kingdoms, we are the sixth, the smallest and the most diverse with 8000 species - 2000 succulents and 6000 fynbos.”

Danielle explains that it was this little group of professional environmental scientists and conservationists that journeyed together from the early 1990s and dreamed of a different kind of community. Misty Cliffs was then known as Scarborough Extension A, and Danielle negotiated and motivated with the surveyor general for an official separation of the two villages, preparing to create a Conservation Village in Misty Cliffs. Whilst not realised in its fullness yet, and with much opportunity for growth still, there is something extraordinary about the place and its thriving ecosystem, something Danielle and Ivan have fought for over the years.



... FYNBOS WARRIORS

“Living here is an enormous privilege,” says Danielle, “And with that privilege comes responsibility and the obligation to take good care of it, and the creatures and plants that live in it. That is not something to be taken lightly.”

She remembers a key moment realising what a massive undertaking this kind of consciousness was going to bring. Danielle said to herself, “Okay girl, you can live a life of leisure and lunches with the ladies, or you can make a difference,” and she realised she was in a position to actually make an impact. “So that is where I focused and invested my energy for the next three decades.” And invest themselves they did! They poured out copious amounts of money, time, energy, plans, and passion – their lives. “We spent our weekends clearing the land of alien vegetation,” laughs Danielle, “It was no small endeavour!”

Ivan and Danielle admit it has been difficult to create something sustainable that does not interfere with the land and ecosystem, and have only managed to keep this important environmental work going with personal financial investment. They speak with no hint of regret though. This breathtaking place has brought them much happiness, joy and purpose.

Misty Cliffs, Scarborough and the mountains around them are a better, healthier and more beautiful ecosystem because of these two Fynbos Warriors.

www.baskloof.com

Baskloof

PRIVATE FYNBOS NATURE RESERVE

Baskloof Private Fynbos Nature Reserve straddles the mountains around and behind the Conservation Villages of Misty Cliffs and Scarborough. The back boundaries of both Misty Cliffs and Scarborough, and the mountain in between, form part of Baskloof.

Table Mountain National Park continues the pristine nature area as the northern boundary as well as to the south to Cape Point. The entrance to Baskloof is on the far south side, directly off the M65, the tourist route to/from Cape Point. It was created by Ivan and Danielle Harris, with a deep commitment to conservation of the incredible fynbos in the area, as well as to educating those around these spaces.

You can join them on a tour of the site and explore what they do, their history, their current initiatives and future plans. The Baskloof team are committed to active conservation, protection of Baskloof, and managing our natural resources sustainably. Their mission: to maintain the ecological and biodiversity integrity of the core nature area of Baskloof in perpetuity with the necessary legal, financial and management structures and plans.

Annual Permits can be bought at The Hub in Main Road, Scarborough. All proceeds go towards the upkeep and conservation of the nature reserve.





COMMUNITY NOTICEBOARD

Coastal Seaweed and Wild Plant Foraging Experience

Join RE Wild Food for a half-day experience where they will introduce you to some of our local edible seaweeds and wild plants. Explore rock pools at low tide, learn how to sustainably harvest and prepare seaweeds and indigenous plants, and watch recipe demos cooked on the fire. Enjoy a wild food inspired, plant-based 4-course meal with paired organic wines. Email lindy@rewildfood.co.za or WhatsApp +27825736123.

Misty Cliffs Village Association Communications

If you are a homeowner, manager or renter in Misty Cliffs and would like to be added to our newsletter mailing list to keep updated with information, please email us: mistycliffs@gmail.com

Snake and Reptile Rehabilitation Centre

Rated one of the most beautiful South's "must do's", it is an excellent destination for anyone interested in learning and observing some of the most fascinating reptile species. You will have the opportunity to learn many interesting facts about the animals, and have an opportunity to get up close and personal with some of our scaly friends! www.minimoshows.org

Dog Walking in Misty Cliffs

There are guidelines on our website from the area manager of the Table Mountain National Park to help us manage walking of dogs in Misty Cliffs. Visit our website at: www.mistycliffs.org.za/conservation/dogs.html

www.mistycliffs.org.za



WILDLIFE AT MISTY CLIFFS

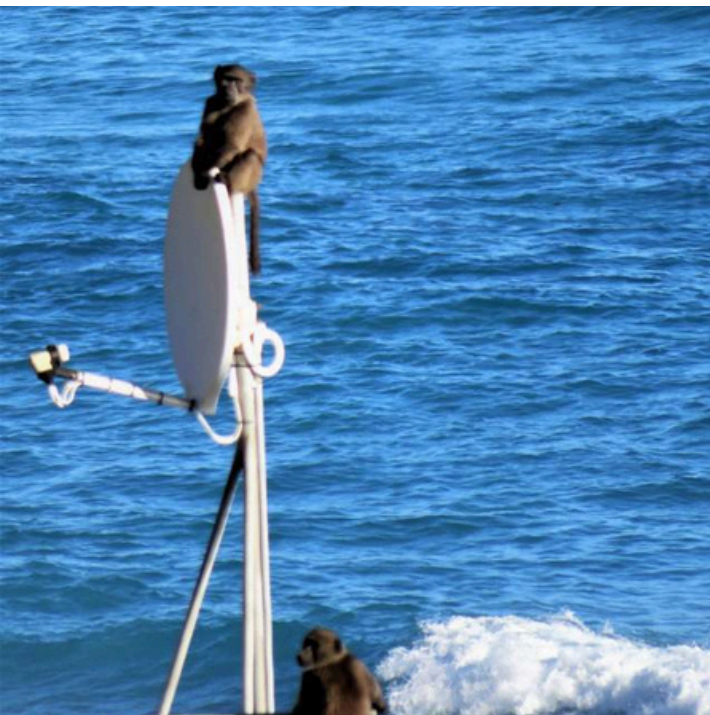
CAPE CLAWLESS OTTERS

Some of the most special creatures that make Misty Cliffs home are the Cape Clawless Otters that live along the shoreline, close to fresh water from a mountain stream. These beautiful animals are the second-largest freshwater otter species, also known as the African Clawless Otter. They are found in a small family cluster here. They are currently listed as 'near threatened', and are protected under South Africa's Animals Protection Act, as well as the Threatened Species Act. Residents and visitors are encouraged to do all they can to avoid disruption of these shy mammals and dogs must be leashed around the sanctuary. Please take note of the signage to protect these otters.



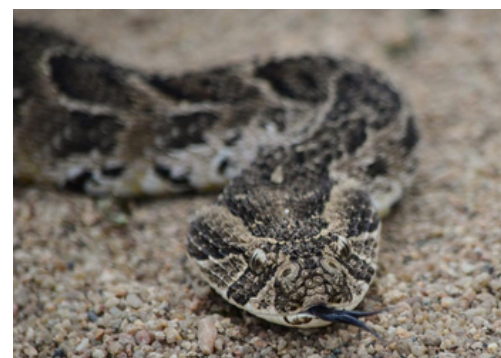
CHACMA BABOONS

This area is home to the Chacma Baboon, also known as the Cape Baboon. They live in small troops with deep social connections. They were living in the mountainous Cape Peninsula long before humans settled here. Whilst they are not threatened generally as a species, urbanisation has put pressure on the creatures who now have more contact with humans than is often comfortable, for both mammals. Living so close to nature, means contact with these human-like creatures, with many seeing them as 'pests'. Management of the local baboons is crucial and keeping garbage out of their reach is key.



LOCAL SNAKES

Staying in such beautiful natural surroundings means we are likely to intersect with creatures who may be dangerous. If you find a snake in your home or garden, please call a snake catcher/rescuer who will come and remove the snake, and set it free elsewhere. There is usually a fee attached to this, but a small price to pay for keeping nature thriving.



REFUSE REMOVAL

Refuse is an important community issue at Misty Cliffs because of Baboons. Living on the edge of nature the way we do, means we have to be extra careful of how we manage waste. If we do not manage our waste disposal responsibly, baboons become habituated to getting a free high-calorie meal in the village and they will take up residence in the cliffs above, ready to descend whenever they can. This has terrible consequences, impacting on so many issues, and disrupting our ecosystem.

Please take note of these important rules.



1. Collection day is Tuesday. Do not put your refuse out before sunset Monday.

2. Wet refuse goes into black plastic bags INSIDE the bins.

- The truck cannot go up Old Camp Rd so the bins are emptied by hand. If refuse is NOT in black plastic bags, it will be ignored.
- The subcontractor comes BEFORE sunrise on Tuesday morning to avoid the baboons.
- The bin should be a baboon-proof bin with a lockable lid.
- Some bins are in combination locked enclosures and the code is often 0000.

3. Recycling goes into the clear bags and is left BESIDE the wheely bin every second week.

- The city uses a separate recycling subcontractor to collect that.
- Check the Misty Cliffs WhatsApp groups for which weeks recycling can be put out.
- The baboons have learned they don't have calorific value so they ignore recycling.

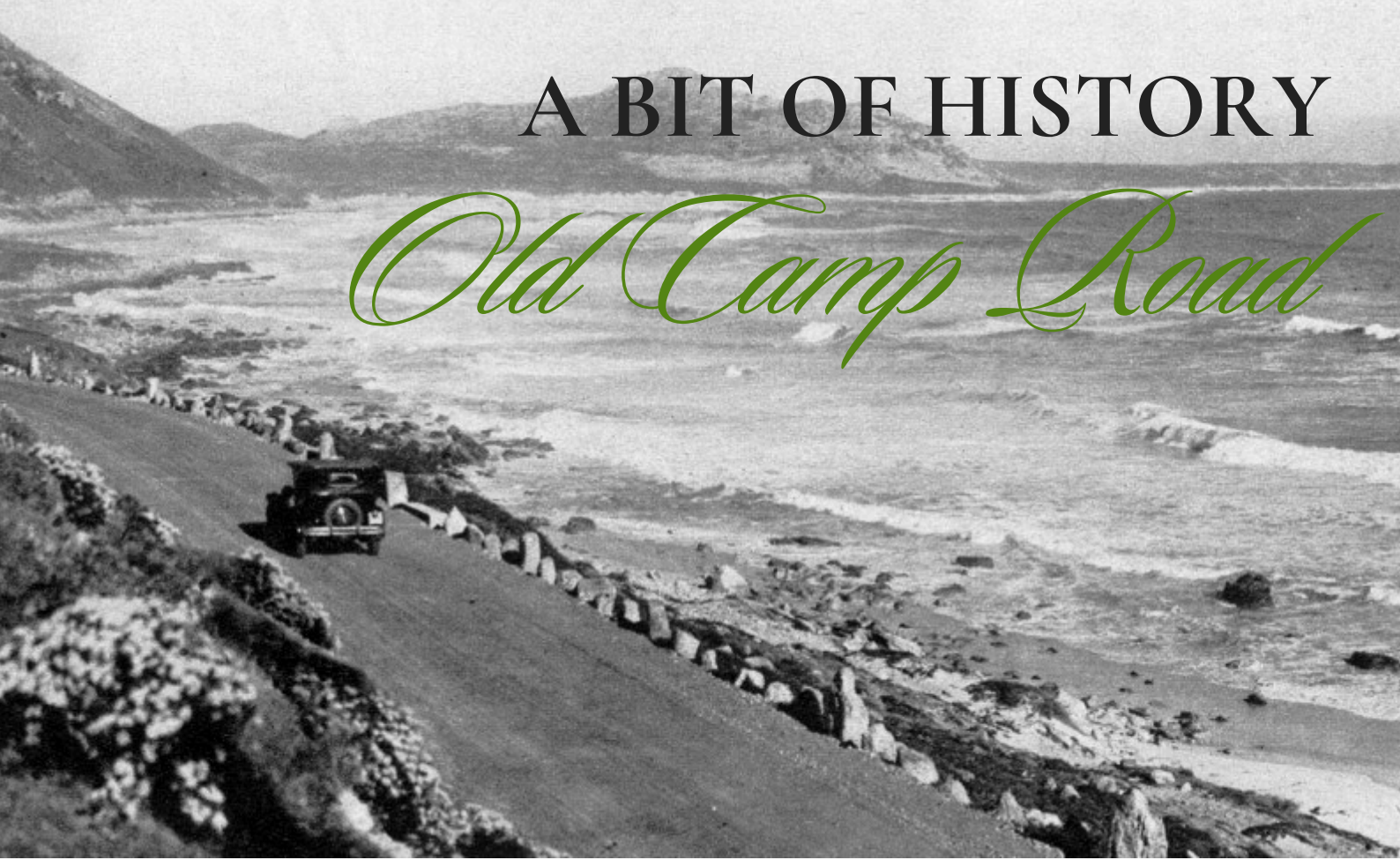
4. Take your wheely bin inside as soon as you can, otherwise walkers, builders, visitors put refuse in the bin during the day and they become a problem again.

5. PLEASE obey these simple rules and the baboons will forage in the mountains (as they should) and you can enjoy your G&T on the deck (as you should).



A BIT OF HISTORY

Old Camp Road

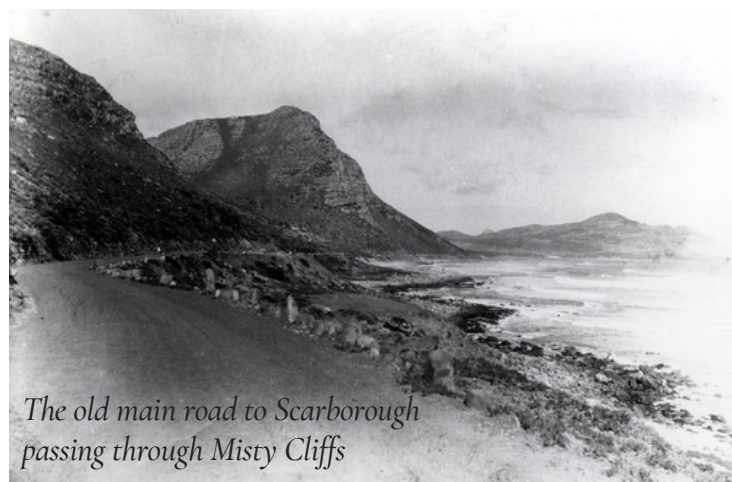


Whilst the history of this little bit of heaven is not crystal clear or well recorded, what is common knowledge is that the area was first inhabited by the indigenous Khoi and San, and Europeans settled here in the late 19th Century. They set up a small farming community in the area, calling it Scarborough after the small seaside town in England. It was in the first quarter of the 1900s that the roads between Hout Bay and Noordhoek area were constructed, at huge risks to those who built them. It is said that many died building roads on mountainous passes around South Africa.

Chapman's Peak's road was started in 1915 and formally opened in 1922. Later, many Italian Prisoners of War were based in South Africa, and used for hard labour, especially in the development of roads, during WW2. They are said to have worked on the road from Kommetjie to Scarborough, setting up camp in Misty Cliffs. This is why Old Camp Road was named that when it was built many years later. It is also interesting, but not surprising, that after the war many Italians decided to settle in sunny South Africa and make it home.



An Elephant Seal on Misty Cliffs beach



The old main road to Scarborough passing through Misty Cliffs

Please email any history you know from the area to : mistycliffs@gmail.com

SAFETY AND SECURITY



GUIDELINES

- Never leave laptops, cameras, brief cases etc. in your car, day or night.
- Never leave laptops, cell phones, wallets, purses, handbags, keys etc. unattended in the house. When you go to bed take these things with you and lock internal doors.
- If you have an alarm make sure it's armed at night, even if you're present.
- If you're absorbed in TV or a good book, make sure all your doors and windows are locked on the inside.
- If you're aware of a break-in happening during the night DO NOT confront the burglars, but quietly phone the home's security company so that there's a good chance of catching intruders red-handed.
- If you don't have an alarm or have not set it, don't expect any generosity from your insurance company if you're robbed.
- Keep a lookout for unfamiliar people or vehicles wandering around the neighbourhood. Notify your security company of any such sightings.

Misty Cliffs has a low crime rate and that is largely because the community funded a security camera system in 2017 that covers main routes, key junctions and perimeters with both infrared and thermal cameras. The system is monitored by Omnivision and unusual situations are responded to by CIS (Condon Investigative Security) based in Scarborough. Since then, crime has fallen to nearly zero and the few incidents have been restricted to petty theft. Criminals know that they are observed when they enter Misty Cliffs, and the streets are monitored all the time.

The implementation of a camera security system here faces a unique challenge due to its bushy mountain landscapes, loud sea noise, open public beach and limited law enforcement resources. Cameras are visible in strategic locations such as on Main Rd, at intersections and on the firebreak. All of these signal to potential wrongdoers that their actions are being monitored. This alone has significantly reduced the likelihood of criminal activities. The recorded footage from these cameras is invaluable for CIS and law enforcement. In the event of a crime, security footage provides crucial evidence that aids in the identification and apprehension of suspects. This capability not only helps solve crimes faster, but also increases the rate of successful prosecutions, reinforcing the village's overall sense of security.

However, the efficacy of the system depends on ongoing community financial support, the quality of the cameras, proper installation, and regular maintenance. Community involvement, financial support and awareness via WhatsApp groups also play a crucial role in maximising the benefits of the security system.

FIRE SAFETY

Awareness

The Western Cape is prone to dangerous uncontrolled fires due to the long, dry, windy and hot summers. Periodic natural fires in fynbos areas are part of the cycles of growth and keep the ecosystem thriving. Whilst fires can be good and need to be managed well, there is the obvious risk to the environment, home and household when fires are unplanned and run out of control.

The Scarborough/Misty Cliffs area has seen some terrible fire damage in the past few years, the latest one in the area was in December 2023. Firefighting crews and volunteers fought the relentless flames for days.

The Scarborough community has formed a unique fire unit to protect their village from advancing wildfires that threaten it every few years.

Baskloof Private Nature Reserve owners have undertaken the maintenance of the firebreak that runs along the urban edge at the back of the mountainside properties.

Living so close to the magnificent fynbos that surrounds us, those who live in or near Misty Cliffs need to be extra vigilant when it comes to fire risks.

Most uncontrolled fires happen when people are careless, especially on windy days. A few things to be aware of:

- Remove alien vegetation as far as is possible from your surroundings, especially if you have an empty plot.
- Create a firebreak if you are on the edge of natural spaces.
- Always have a large container with sand in it nearby.
- Do not leave open fires unattended and smother them with sand once not needed.
- Don't allow children to make fires without adult supervision.
- Dispose of hot ash and coal away from any flammable plant material or rubbish.
- Make sure there are no illegal or faulty electrical connections in or near your home as illegal or faulty connections can get hot and start a fire.
- Keep the area around your home clear of materials that can burn, such as firewood, kindling and rubbish.
- If you burn rubbish, do so on cooler days when there is no wind.
- Dispose of lit cigarette butts responsibly.
- No fireworks or flares to be used.
- Report veld fires immediately by calling 112 from a cell phone or 10177 from a landline.
- Have the emergency numbers easily accessible to get help.



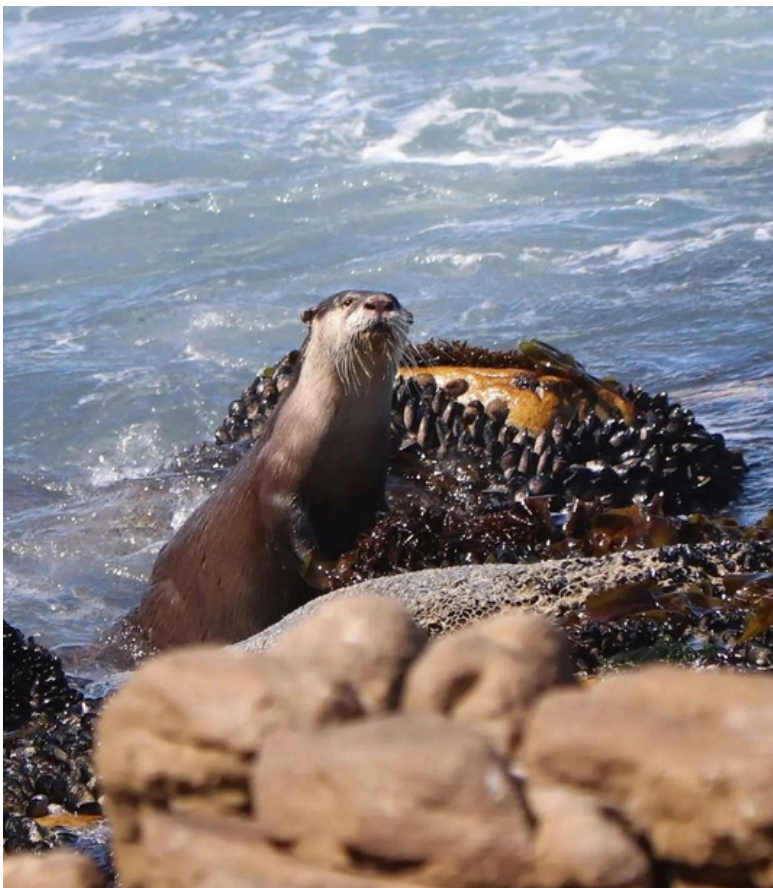
Thanks to Cape Nature for these tips.



PICS OF THE SEASON



Misty Cliffs Shoreline Beauty - by Bev Meldrum



Cape Clawless Otter at Misty Cliffs - by Hilary Kerr

Top Two

Summer, Winter, Autumn, Spring - each season at Misty Cliffs boasts its own special allure. These photographs are the two that best express some of what compels people to visit ... or stay. The winner will receive a prize from a local business. Prizes range from vouchers for a meal or local activity, or a decent bottle of wine. Don't forget to capture those amazing moments for the second edition of Village Life.

Please email your photographs taken in and around Misty Cliffs, along with a caption and your full name to: mistycliffs@gmail.com

BUSINESS AND SERVICES

If you would like to advertise in the next edition, please email mistycliffs@gmail.com



Enjoy hiking the beautiful
footpaths of Baskloof

R250 per person per annum
R 60 per person per day

The permit fee contributes to path
maintenance, signage and alien clearing.
Get your required permit here at the
Village Hub for a selection of hikes starting
from Hilltop Road



Danielle Harris 082 680 6188 / www.baskloof.com

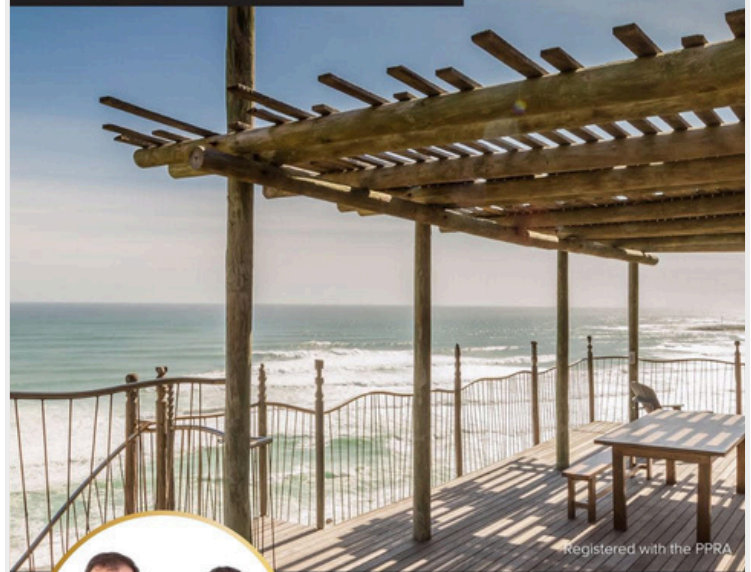
JAWITZ

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021 444 0111 - KOMMETJIE ROAD



MEDICAL EMERGENCY

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082 782 4444
021 782 0606

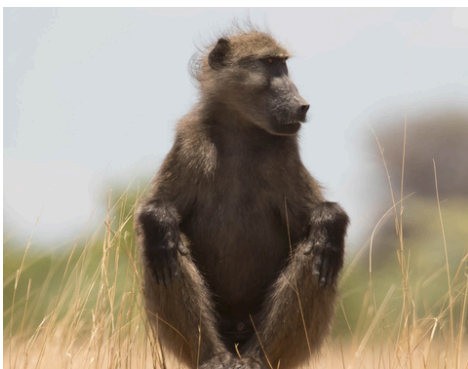


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SNAKES
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